

Message From the Manager

Dear Citizens,

The Fiscal Year 2003 Annual Report demonstrates that Blacksburg Town Government strives to be innovative, progressive, and visionary. Throughout this annual report you will find numerous examples of creativity, recognitions, awards, and leading edge technology. These achievements are only possible because of a highly talented and dedicated pool of employees and quality leadership from Town Council.

I am particularly proud that Blacksburg is one of the first municipalities in the nation to utilize technology for an emergency and information alert system. *BlacksburgAlert* combines technology and telecommunication to inform citizens of emergencies and pertinent town information.

Blacksburg led the way in the creation of the *Blacksburg Partnership*. *Blacksburg Partnership* is a non-profit economic development organization serving the Town of Blacksburg. The Partnership is comprised of key officials from Blacksburg town government, Virginia Tech, and major businesses in the Blacksburg area, all committed to improving Blacksburg's future.

Another major accomplishment is the award of a \$1 Million Community Development Block Grant to rehabilitate and provide new affordable housing in the Roanoke – Lee Streets area. This is the first grant of this type awarded to Blacksburg.

During this past year, the Town conducted a comprehensive town-wide citizen survey utilizing the expertise of the National Research Center. The results of this survey identified several problem areas that citizens said need to be improved. These areas included downtown parking, affordable housing, retail diversity, and job opportunities. I am happy to report that major initiatives are underway in each of these areas.

Town government continued to receive national awards and recognition. The *AboutTown* newsletter received the 3CMA Silver Communication Award. The International City/County Management Association recognized Blacksburg with the Certificate of Achievement for Performance Measurement, only one of twenty-two in the nation. The Financial Services Department received the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 23rd consecutive year and Distinguished Budget Award for the 11th consecutive year.

Hopefully, you will also be proud of what was accomplished this past year and what we envision will be accomplished in the future.

Gary A. Huff
Town Manager